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Before The Labor and Public Employees Committee

OPPOSING

~~SB-987~~, An Act Requiring Community Workforce Agreements for Construction Projects at the Connecticut State University System

March 1, 2011

I am the second generation president of a small electrical contracting company in CT and an active member of The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England. I am the past president of the Canton Chamber of Commerce, therefore qualifying me as an active participant in the community.

I strongly urge you to oppose all Community Workforce Agreements and SB 987 as they unfairly exclude merit shops from competing and winning construction projects with their work forces.

I have 36 of the most dedicated, hardworking employees an employer could ask for. All of our field employees have electrical licenses, are OSHA certified, take their continuing education classes every year; attend regular safety training classes, etc. As a company we are an approved apprenticeship sponsor with the state of CT in good standing, have an approved Affirmative Action Plan with CT DOL, we are a Small Business Enterprise, hold a DAS Contractor Prequalified Certificate for Connecticut, are approved by CT DOT, and are prequalified with The University of Connecticut as an approved On-Call Trade Contractor. We follow all the required rules and regulations set by the state of CT to work on all types of electrical jobs, but simply because we are not organized you want to exclude us from being able to work on University of CT jobs using our current employees.

The bidding process for any and all work on campuses at the University of CT is highly scrutinized by the University of CT, therefore limiting contractors and their ability to do work already. I feel this bill will jeopardize the quality and effectiveness of work done on UConn Campuses. The University of CT has put a lot of time and effort into putting together a prequalification packet they use to ensure they are getting the best contractors. Getting prequalified is a very lengthy, time consuming process. In addition to the Standard Prequalification Application The University analyzes our financial statements, past work experience, safety manual & policies, insurance coverage, key personnel resume's, Experience Modification Rate, bonding capacity, OSHA recordable incidents, etc. Those of us who have obtained this prequalification should not be restricted from using our labor forces to complete these projects. In addition we should not have to sign Community Workforce Agreement which I feel would put unnecessary burdens on our company and eliminate the hard working dedicated employees I currently employ.

The state of CT needs to cut costs and reduce unnecessary spending. What is going to cost the state less monies, having 20% of the workforce bidding the work, or 100%? One of the most important aspects of the bidding process is to choose the company with the best qualifications and the lowest price. This can only be achieved if "all" contractors are allowed to bid on the work. SB 987 will eliminate 80% of the electrical contractors from bidding on all University of CT jobs using our current workforce. In essence, increasing the costs to all tax payers. The taxpayers in Connecticut expect Lawmakers to act responsibly with their monies. This bill and all bills supporting PLA's, otherwise known as Community Work Force agreements go against this basic principle.

In closing I would like to state that I am appalled that our legislators have not taken the time to realize the full impact of PLAs (Community Workforce Agreements) and the financial impact that they bear on all tax payers in the state of CT. These tough economic times require our law makers to put aside their political beliefs and do what is right financially for the tax payers.

I am not opposed to unions in concept as everyone has a right to work, but this has gone too far. I implore you to think of all communities and their workforces not just one special interest group.

Thank you,
Warren Horton